

July 10, 1961

1-22-77 DEPT OF STATE A/GDC/SP

Dear Chet:

Thank you for your letter of 23 June. In it, as you may recall, you asked for any ideas I may have on the Berlin situation or the German situation in general.

Today's press contains some pro and con arguments about Willie Brandt's idea for a general peace conference and Adenauer's criticism of it. I was particularly interested in this development of the idea. About a week or so ago it had come to me in the form of a letter from Klaus Mennert. I attach the letter herewith. Mennert is well-known to Chip Bohlen. Although he is a writer and newscaster he is one of the best-informed people in Europe on Soviet affairs. Aside from a personal friendship of some ten years standing we are both members of the American Council for Germanv.

All of us here, and I speak for the French as well as the Americans in the Embassy, are following the developments in the Berlin situation with considerable concern. Khrushchev's announcement on his cessation of the cutback in the Russian military forces and his very impressive air show yesterday appear to be most significant. Despite all of the sounds emanating from the Kremlin I still feel that ultimately it will be a salami-slicing situation with which we will have to deal. The present build-up on Khrushchev's part will place him in a position to assume the role of a very good fellow when, after the signing of the treaty with East Germany this Fall, he then assures us that our access to Berlin will be not interfered with, and that he has only the most peaceful of intentions.

The

The Honorable

Chester Bowles, ..
Under Secretary of State, James
Washington, D. C.

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The real trouble will come later and I was particularly pleased to read the President's comment about the need for patience and understanding over a long period of time on the part of the American public. I am convinced that rather than war this Fall we will have to deal with problems that will become increasingly irritating, starting some time next year. Nevertheless, I have believed for some time, and I so wrote in 1958, that Khrushchev's chances will be maximized in about another year or so. After that, when the fruits of the late measures taken by the last Administration and Mr. Kennedy's present endeavors begin to bear fruit, Khrushchev's prospects will begin to diminish.

So, in conclusion, it seems to me that there is a real threat of war in immediate prospect but I believe that Khrushchev is too clever to force a war this year. Instead he will undertake a series of increasingly annoying measures, none of which in themselves will appear to be worth a war, next year with the intent of achieving a de facto triumph over us within the next two to three years. I think that finally, he will go to war to accomplish his ends, if his irritants short of war fail to accomplish their purpose. Unfortunately, from a technical point of view his air show was tremendously impressive. He has not slowed down his research and development program in new hardware, and the amount that he must be spending on new armament, by our standards, should be pretty staggering.

From this end it appears that the measures now being taken by the United States, so far, are adequate. There is one aspect of this, however, that it seems to me we should really do something about. It is the problem of Spain. There is no denying the fact that the Pyrenees and Spain are there and that NATO needs that land depth. I realize also that there is an aversion on the part of some nations to accepting Spain in NATO. However, the threat made us be realistic in admitting Germany and now, it seems to me, we should take measures leading to the admission of Spain into NATO. If Mr. Khrushchev continues his bellicose announcements this should give us the very opportunity that we need. With the danger increasing hourly it is past time that we recognize the necessity for integrating our military endeavors in Europe with the potentialities in Spain. I am not sure of the value of the Spanish military forces, and I would not consider them to be very high, but the land area of Spain will be

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of critical importance. This may be particularly true if the Soviets succeed in seizing portions of the African land area and thus ultimately place present NATO forces in danger of being outflanked by missile-equipped forces. I mentioned the importance of Spain to General de Gaulle when I talked to him a month or so ago, and characteristically, his answer was positive in tone but lacked specifics. I have been assured, however, that he would look with favor upon any action taken towards Spain's entry into NATO.

I thank you very much for your understanding help with the problem of Cecil Lyon. He is an invaluable asset to me, particularly now with the situation as intense as it is here in France and with my plans to get out and visit the country. I have made a trip to Bordeaux and another to Normandy. Last week I made an overnight trip to Lyon and a one-day trip to Vichy. Mrs. Gavin has accompanied me and they have been most successful. That sort of activity will slow down a bit during the summer but I have plans to do extensive travelling beginning in September. I find it most helpful in acquiring a real understanding of the true situation in this very troubled country.

Best regards.

Sincerely,



James M. Gavin

P.S. My political advisers in the Embassy counsel against any action on Spain at this time. They feel that we have air bases in Spain, etc. and to take steps to get a formal admission of Spain into NATO would be to aggravate our NATO friends at a time when we have problems enough. I would add, however, that I feel that the admission of Spain would be in the best interests of all and if Khrushchev continues his bellicose attitude and his military build-up we should at least take the preliminary steps by discussing the problem with our NATO allies, having in mind the bringing in of Spain at an early date.

Enclosure

Letter from R. Meffert.

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that he is not all against this suggestion, for one particular reason: Perhaps he has been so very vociferous these last weeks because he wants to go before his Party Congress in October as the strong man who can scare anybody. He has been changing the top party apparatus lately to such an extent that he may not be quite sure who is who in the Congress. Once he has the Congress behind him and the wires firmly in his hand he might be glad to find a plausible excuse to get away from his six months deadline on the Berlin question.

It would be desirable to surprise K for once. The President could discuss this matter directly with MacMillan and de Gaulle, without involving the diplomatic machinery. If they agree, he might ask Adenauer for a day to Washington to sell him the idea. And then send out the invitations.

That's all. If you like it, use it as your idea.

With sincere friendship and many regards to you and your "girls",

Always yours,

Ken

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July 22, 1961

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Dear Jim:

I greatly appreciated your letter of July 10 with its thoughtful observations on the German situation. I agree that salami-slicing may still represent the major element in Kremlin thinking. This is, of course, the hardest kind of tactic to meet with firmness and consistency as our attention is constantly being diverted from one crisis to another.

Your suggestion regarding Spain deserves the most serious study even though, as you say, the political repercussions are bound to be considerable should we take any steps towards formally admitting Spain to NATO.

I leave Monday on a three week's trip to Africa the Middle East and South Asia which I think will be of great value in bringing our missions a better understanding of the current emphasis in our foreign policy. I wish I could stop over to see you but I shall look forward to talking at length with you when you come to Washington in the fall.

With my warmest regards,

Sincerely,

/S/ Chet

Chester Bowles

The Honorable
James M. Gavin,
American Ambassador,
Paris

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JUL 24 1961

A true copy of signed original

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